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#### PRESS RELEASE

#### TRACEY EMIN. SEX AND SOLITUDE Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 16 March—20 July 2025

#### Tracey Emin's first institutional solo show in Italy opens at Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi with a wide selection of historic and recent works exploring passion, vulnerability and selfexpression

From 16 March to 20 July 2025, Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi in Florence presents *Tracey Emin. Sex and Solitude*, the **first major institutional exhibition in Italy** dedicated to one of the most celebrated British contemporary artists.

Curated by Arturo Galansino, Director General of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, this exhibition delves into Emin's varied work, encompassing paintings, drawings, film, photography, embroidery, appliqué, sculptures, and neon installations. The titular themes of sex and solitude underpin over 60 works on display, that span from different moments of her career, taking visitors on an intensely personal yet universally resonant journey that reflects deeply on the themes of the body and desire.

Several artworks on view at Palazzo Strozzi will be shown in Italy for the first time, including the new monumental bronze sculpture *I Followed You to the End* (2024), installed in the Palazzo's Renaissance courtyard, and the seminal installation *Exorcism of the last painting I ever made* (1996). Furthermore, selected artworks will be specifically produced on the occasion of the exhibition.

Emin is renowned for her candid, confessional approach to art, transforming personal experiences into deeply intimate, vulnerable and powerful works. Rather than depicting precise events literally, Emin conveys the raw emotions they evoke as well as the physical reactions they elicit, from sexual passion to love, from anguish to melancholy.

Within the exhibition, paintings such as *It - didnt stop - I didnt stop* (2019) or *There was blood* (2022) embody these expressive forces, straddling figuration and abstraction through gestural mark-making and the use of bold colours. Her sculptures, meanwhile, translate this emotional charge into threedimensional form, capturing the vulnerability and strength of the human body through their materiality, scale and dynamism, as in *All I want is you* (2016) that expresses a close sense of intimacy and introspection. Emin's text-based pieces function similarly, using direct, explicit language to engage viewers on a visceral level, such us in neon works like *Those who suffer love* (2009) or in embroidery or appliquéd blanket pieces such as *I do not expect* (2002).

Life and art are inseparable in her creative process, leading her to create works where personal stories transform into existential metaphors. Through her honest and autobiographical expression, Emin focuses on themes of the body and figuration, situating herself within a distinct lineage in art history alongside artists like Edvard Munch and Egon Schiele, two of her primary influences. Her exploration of the body and raw emotions aligns her with a long-standing artistic tradition centered on the human figure, creating a resonance that both contrasts with and converges upon Florence's Renaissance heritage, embodied by Palazzo Strozzi itself.

*Tracey Emin. Sex and Solitude* is organized by Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. Public Supporters: Comune di Firenze, Regione Toscana, Città Metropolitana di Firenze, Camera di Commercio di Firenze. Private Supporters: Fondazione CR Firenze, Intesa Sanpaolo, Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati, Palazzo Strozzi Partners Committee. Main Sponsor: Gucci.



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#### **About Tracey Emin**

Tracey Emin DBE RA was born in 1963 in Croydon, London, and grew up in the seaside town of Margate. Her work spans drawings, paintings, tapestries, embroidery, film, bronze sculptures, and neon signs. The artist draws on her own life to inform her work, referencing deeply intimate experiences from her sexual history, abuse, and abortion to gender, relationships, and, most recently, her cancer and disability.

In 1999 she attracted huge publicity when she was nominated for the Turner Prize and exhibited *My Bed* at Tate Gallery, London. The work, which had been made the year before as the result of a period of severe emotional flux, features the artist's own unmade bed surrounded by personal items and other detritus, such as condoms, blood-stained underwear, empty bottles of alcohol, cigarette buds.

From there, Emin's career continued to grow: in 2007 she represented the United Kingdom at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale, in 2011 she was made the Royal Academy's Professor of Drawing, one of the first two female professors in the history of the institution.

Today Emin enjoys full institutional recognition. She has recently opened the Tracey Karima Emin (TKE) Studios in Margate, a professional artist's studios entirely subsidized by her, with an additional free, studio-based, art school programme called Tracey Emin Artist Residency (TEAR). In 2024, she was honoured with a Damehood in the King's Birthday Honours for her services to art.

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#### The Exhibition

The exhibition consists of over sixty works from public and private collections around the world, displayed across the Piano Nobile and the public spaces of the courtyard and façade of Palazzo Strozzi. The thematic path explores different aspects and moments of the artist's career through various media such as painting, sculpture, installation, and video, using diverse techniques and materials like embroidery, bronze, and neon.

A large neon sign on the **façade** of Palazzo Strozzi welcomes visitors with the powerful visual declaration that gives the exhibition its title: *Sex and Solitude* (2025), a site-specific work created for the show, illuminating the Renaissance architecture in vivid blue. This intervention immediately introduces two poles of Tracey Emin's exploration: the body and sexuality on one hand, solitude and vulnerability on the other. The body, fragile and carnal, is always at the center of her inquiry, suspended between desire and suffering, love and loss, as exemplified by the work exhibited in the **courtyard** of Palazzo Strozzi, *I Followed You To The End* (2024), a monumental bronze sculpture of a female figure that dominates the space, evoking a strong tension between monumentality and intimacy.

The reclamation of the female body emerges in numerous works throughout the exhibition, including **Exorcism of the last painting I ever made** (1996), an installation presented for the first time in Italy, which documents the historic performance that marked Emin's return to painting after years of interruption. In one of Palazzo Strozzi's rooms, the temporary studio where the artist lived and worked for three and a half weeks in front of the public is reconstructed, showcasing drawings and paintings inspired by male artists such as Egon Schiele, Yves Klein, and Pablo Picasso. Becoming both the subject and object of her art, Emin performs a kind of artistic exorcism, subverting the role of women: no longer mere models, but active protagonists.









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At the heart of the exhibition, **painting** serves as a central expressive medium for Emin, with each canvas creating a field of emotional tensions marked by a strong materiality, as seen in works like *Hurt Heart* (2015), *It was all too Much* (2018), *It – didn't stop – I didn't stop* (2019), *There was blood* (2022), *Not Fuckable* (2024), and *I waited so Long* (2022), where the artist works instinctively, allowing forms to emerge, teetering between figuration and abstraction. The layers of color and marks left by the painting gesture retain the traces of the creative process, with visible erasures and revisions. Rapid brushstrokes and paint drips imbue the canvas with a vibrant, unstable intensity, amplifying the passionate character of the works while conveying feelings of fragility and suspended memory.

Love is a central theme in Tracey Emin's work, explored in its facets of desire, romance, and pain, as seen in embroideries like *I don't need to see you I can feel you*! (2016) and *No Distance* (2016). A similar intensity permeates her bronze sculptures with silver nitrate patina, such as *Coming Down From Love* (2024) and *In my defence – I thought of only you* (2017). **Language** plays a fundamental role in Emin's practice, both in titles and within the works themselves. The words she uses are always direct and explicit, aiming to viscerally engage the audience, blending confession and assertion. Emin's famous use of neon, with which she creates phrases in her own handwriting, transforms intimate expression into a visual and emotional experience. Examples include the large neon sign on the façade of Palazzo Strozzi, as well as works like *Love Poem for CF* (2007), based on verses written in the 1990s for her ex-boyfriend Carl Freedman, which transforms into a universal declaration of pain and desire, or *Those who Suffer LOVE* (2009), in dialogue with a video of the same title in the exhibition space.

"Contemporary art is an integral part of Palazzo Strozzi's identity, and we are proud to present Tracey Emin's work in a major exhibition, unprecedented in Italy, allowing the public to discover one of the most famous and influential artists in the contemporary art scene," says Arturo Galansino, Director General of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi and curator of the exhibition. "The exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi is not a retrospective but follows a thematic path, offering the audience an immersion in the conflicting emotions that drive Tracey Emin's art. Sex and solitude, the opposite poles evoked by the title, represent the core of her artistic practice, an intimate dialogue between the desire for connection and the inevitable isolation of existence."

The main sponsor of the exhibition, Gucci, strengthens its collaboration with Palazzo Strozzi through a **special screening dedicated to Tracey Emin's video art** as part of the *Controluce. Stories of Beauty* project. A selection of the artist's historic videos (*Burning Up*, 1997; *Riding For a Fall*, 1998; *Reincarnation*, 2005) will be presented in the Cinema Room of Palazzo Gucci in Piazza della Signoria, Florence, offering further insight into the work of an artist who makes the relationship between words and images the tool of an intimate and visceral narrative between art and life.

Digital exhibition texts: Italian: www.palazzostrozzi.org/te-tracey-emin English: www.palazzostrozzi.org/en/te-tracey-emin



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#### **FACT SHEET**

Title	Tracey Emin. Sex and Solitude	
venue	Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi	
dates	16 marzo - 20 luglio 2025	
curated by	Arturo Galansino	
Promoted and organised by	Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi	
Pubblic Supporters	Comune di Firenze, Regione Toscana, Città Metropolitana di Firenze, Camera di Commercio di Firenze	
Private Supporters	Fondazione CR Firenze, Intesa Sanpaolo, Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati, Comitato dei Partner di Palazzo Strozzi	
Main Sponsor	Gucci	
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Technical Partners	Rinascente, Toscana Aeroporti	
Mobility Partner	at - autolinee toscane	
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## PHOTO SHEET

0.1	Tracey Emin Sex and Solitude, 2025 neon, 106 × 804 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube Photo: OKNO Studio© Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	
0.2	Tracey Emin <i>I Followed You To The End</i> 2024 patinated bronze 260 × 690 × 393 cm Collection Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Foto © White Cube (Theo Christelis)	
2.1	Tracey Emin Naked Photos – Life Model Goes Mad I 1996 giclée on photo rag paper 53,5 × 53 cm Courtesy of the Artist © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Foto © White Cube (Theo Christelis)	
2.4	Tracey Emin Exorcism of the last painting I ever mad 1996 performance / installation internal dim. 350 × 430 × 430 cm Courtesy of Schroeder Collection and Faurschou Collection © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Courtesy White Cube	



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3.3	Tracey Emin It - didnt stop - I didnt stop 2019 acrylic on canvas 152 × 183.5 cm Bruxelles, Xavier Hufkens Gallery © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	
4.9	Tracey Emin <i>Hurt Heart</i> 2015 acrylic on canvas 20.3 × 20.3 cm ACAF Collection by Yashian Schauble, Melbourne, Australia © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Foto © White Cube (George Darrell)	HEART
4.b1	Tracey Emin Those who Suffer LOVE 2009 neon 57 × 209.3 exhibition copy Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Foto © Stephen White. Courtesy White Cube	The abo Sutter Love
6.4	Tracey Emin <i>Thriving on Solitude</i> 2020 acrylic on canvas 30.07 × 30.07 cm JHA COLLECTION © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	



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7.1	Tracey EminI do not expect2002appliquéd blanket264 × 185 cmCollection: Art Gallery of New South Wales- Donated through the Australian Government'sCultural Gifts Program by Geoff Ainsworth AM2018© Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.Foto © Stephen White. Courtesy White Cube	I DO NOT EXPECT TO BE A BUT I DO EXPECT TO DIE A LO N E IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS OUT LIKE A MALL SPLIT WY BRAINS ALL SPLIT WY BRAINS
8.2	Tracey Emin <i>I waited so Long</i> 2022 acrylic on canvas 183.1 × 183.3 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025. Foto HV-Studio.	
8.3	Tracey Emin <i>The Decent 2112 HK</i> 2016 embroidered calico 163 × 220.8 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	
8.12	Tracey Emin <i>Crucifixion</i> 2014 bronze with white patina 25 × 17 × 7 cm Courtesy of the Artist & private collection © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	



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9.2	Tracey Emin <i>All I want is you</i> 2016 bronze 238 × 245 × 233 cm Bruxelles, Xavier Hufkens Gallery © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	
9.3	Tracey Emin You Should have Saved me 2023 acrylic on canvas 182.1 × 120.1 cm Fentener van Vlissingen collection © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2025.	



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### PORTRAITS

Courtesy Tracey Emin studio	
Courtesy Tracey Emin studio	
Courtesy Tracey Emin studio	



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#### TRACEY EMIN IN DIALOGUE WITH ARTURO GALANSINO

(excerpt from the exhibition catalogue)

**Arturo Galansino:** Let's start with the title of the show, Sex and Solitude. Your work has always been unapologetically open about sexuality, from periods of intense sexual activity to years of celibacy, and the profound impact of sexual trauma. How has your perception of sex evolved over the years, and how does it continue to inform your work?

**Tracey Emin:** Sex is very complicated for me, and it always has been. When I was younger, around fourteen or fifteen, sex was a vehicle, a way of getting somewhere, a way of moving, a way of exploring, a way of seeing the world through people, and feeling people. Then I realised that I was giving much more than I was receiving, and I wasn't happy about it. At that time I went through a period of celibacy again. Throughout my life I've gone through long periods of celibacy and abstaining. The longest was around ten years.

I think I might be going through another period of that now. This time it's different because of all the surgery that I've had. My body is very affected by everything that has happened to it. I also think our body has memory. My body's been hurt by love and by sex and by surgery and by rape and by sexually transmitted diseases and by abortions. It's like that part of my body is quite numb now, because of psychological and physical reasons. Now what's more important than sex to me is Love, definitely Love, it has to be Love. The chances of having both at the same time are pretty rare, especially for me.

**AG:** Talking instead about the idea of solitude, I'm thinking about how it manifests in many forms whether as the loneliness of loss, the isolation of creation, or the introspection required for self-discovery. What's your relationship with solitude?

**TE:** I love solitude. When I was younger, I used to think that I was lonely because I was lonely and I felt alone. I felt alone. And I didn't understand how to use that feeling. I saw it as being a negative thing. Now, solitude for me is like one of the greatest, most amazing feelings. It's like understanding nature, understanding time, and being at one with myself. Being totally complete, mentally, physically, emotionally. And my favourite moment of solitude is painting. When I'm creating, painting, writing, thinking; that's when I feel really fantastic. And without moments of solitude, I can't be creative, it's impossible.

One thing is to be surrounded by people of warmth, by friendship and love. But to be creative I have to have solitude, I have to have that moment of isolation. And that's why I think I have insomnia. That's why I think I have strange sleeping hours. When I fall asleep on a sofa or a chair and I wake up in the middle of the night, that is one of my moments of solitude, when I feel like I'm the only person in the entire universe, that's when I usually can think things that I normally wouldn't. And even being in bed has a problem because bed is very comfortable, and the moments of solitude I need have to be like fierce winds, like rain slashing, they have to be like sun burning, like walking in the desert. Solitude has to be this extreme to work. And that's when I have my best thoughts, my best ideas, my highest moments of creativity. But it doesn't have to hurt. And that's why when I was younger there was a confusion between loneliness and solitude.

Solitude is strength. There's a massive difference between being stuck on the ridge of a mountain and not being able to go up or go down, and climbing to the summit, standing on the summit and feeling triumphant. It's a massive difference.

**AG:** Palazzo Strozzi is a venue steeped in history. How does exhibiting your work in such a historic setting influence the way you think about your works? On a more personal note, what has your relationship with Italy been like over the years, and how has our country influenced you personally and artistically?



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TE: I've shown in Italy quite a lot through my gallery, Lorcan O'Neill. But I haven't actually ever shown in an institutional space in Italy or had a solo show there. And Palazzo Strozzi is extremely beautiful, architecturally, historically, where it's placed, the shape of the rooms, everything. It really suits me, it's fantastic. And so, I'm excited about seeing my work in that environment and also excited in showing in an institutional space in Italy. And in Florence! It's incredible! Steeped in so much art history, so much history. So, I'm also excited to be there. I have this thing, and I've had it for a long time: I won't show in architectural spaces I don't feel good about. My priority is showing in cities, towns, and countries that I feel good about. So, Palazzo Strozzi has everything for me I'm really excited.

AG: Florence's history with bronze sculpture, particularly from the Renaissance, is iconic. For example, the 15th century opened in this city with the famous contest to design the baptistery's North door, which in a way kickstarted Early Renaissance. You did something similar to Ghiberti with your recent project for the National Portrait Gallery's bronze doors. How has working with bronze influenced your artistic expression? What challenges and discoveries have you encountered with this medium?

**TE:** For years I've wanted to make large bronze sculptures, figurative ones taken from my drawings, but I didn't know how to, and I didn't want to cheat, and I wanted to learn myself. And then I become friends with Louise Bourgeois, Jerry Gorovoy, Scott Lyon Wall, and worked at an Art Foundry in New York where I learnt the lost wax technique and I started from scratch. I started making tiny, tiny little bronze sculptures. And now, years later, I'm working with AB Foundry Fine art Foundry in London, making the hugest giant bronzes and I love them as much as the little ones. And I love the fact that I've gone from tiny to giant and I've learnt so much. It's really the only new thing I've learnt in the last twenty years and that's because I had to find a way of going forward with my work. The history of bronze is pretty phenomenal because of the alchemic materials involved.

AG: The tactile quality of your sculptures, often marked by visible fingerprints and other textures, evokes a sense of intimacy and immediacy. In pieces like the one you've created for our courtyard, is this texture a deliberate choice to convey something specific, or is it an organic part of your creative process?

TE: It's definitely an organic part of the process. My hands, my fingerprints, touching the work. But also, I've got to be really honest, there's a lot of technique involved, there's a lot of sanding, there's a lot of layering, there's a lot of hard work involved and it's not just me doing it, obviously. It's the foundry, it's Harry Weller, who I work with. It's a whole giant process that goes on. And the fact that at the end it looks so effortless, it's absolutely amazing. But I assure you it's not. Making a giant huge bronze on that level is extremely difficult. It has to be successful. Because no one wants to be stuck with two tons of bronze they don't like.

AG: You've created significant public art pieces. What do you believe is the role of public art, and how does creating for public spaces differ from making work for a gallery or a museum setting?

TE: Well, when I was younger, I used to get really angry about a lot of public art. I thought it was very male and bombastic, and I found a lot of it quite unattractive and a little bit embarrassing unless it was very conservative. I couldn't understand why there wasn't more public art that actually was emotionally fulfilling. And then I realised that it's because there's very little room for emotion in the public realm. If anything, that would be considered dangerous. But still, I wanted to try, so I started off by making extremely tiny public sculptures like Roman Standard, which is my bird on a pole and it's very small, it's like the size of a tiny bird. And then there are the birds in Sydney, sixty-eight sculptures of tiny birds perched down one street in Sydney's central business district. And I did Baby





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Things in Folkstone, which are sculptures of baby clothes left in different places. So, I wanted to make an emotional impact with public sculptures by making tiny feminine sculptures.

And then I decided to go the complete opposite, avoiding being macho. I still wanted it to be very feminine. And now I've got a nine-meter high sculpture, *The Mother*, in Oslo, which is essentially my mother: an old lady kneeling. I've never seen a public sculpture or statue of an old woman before. So, I think I've really done something new and quite sensational in a way.

**AG:** As a student, you would frequently visit the National Gallery in London. How these early experiences influenced your approach to art history and your connection to Expressionist artists like Munch and Schiele?

**TE:** When I was at the Royal College of Art I used to catch a bus from Elephant and Castle to Westminster, and then get the tube from Westminster to South Kensington. But sometimes I'd just stay on the bus and get off at the National Gallery. I'd go in there, downstairs, and I'd draw the icons, or I'd just look around and take notes. I did this maybe a couple of times a week for two years and that's what informed me about painting. That's what informed me about art history. The art history that I knew previously from that was all Expressionism and pre-war European art. And suddenly I was pushed into another realm of understanding the classics, classic ideas. My whole mind sort of expanded, so Munch was pre-National Gallery and Renaissance painting and classic painting came via the National Gallery. And it was selftaught 'cos I've never really learnt art history, I only learnt about the art that I liked.

**AG:** Salvation is a recurring concept in your work, even if it's not conceived in a religious sense. What does "salvation" mean to you personally, and from what, if anything, do you wish to be saved?

**TE:** Salvation for me is peace. Salvation is forgiving. So, to be forgiven, the strongest thing you can do is to forgive. And when you've truly forgiven something or someone... the feeling of release from that is incredible. You grow a thousand times. That to me is one of the greatest senses of salvation: understanding and forgiving situations, people, time, loss. I don't want to live being resentful and I don't want to live with hate, and I don't want to live with fear. The things I don't want to live with the most are aggression and violence within myself. I want to be free from all of that. The freer you are from all of that, the easier life becomes. And the easier my life becomes, the happier I become, which means I can focus on the things that I really love, which is art.

**AG:** Memory, both personal and collective, plays a significant role in your work. How do you navigate the process of translating deeply personal memories into a visual form that resonates with a broader audience? Do you see your art as a way of preserving or perhaps even reshaping these memories?

**TE:** I see it as a re-understanding of these memories. When I was fifteenI would see something in a very different way from how I see it now. We go through these different stages in life and so do our memories. Our memories change for our actual living experience. It's like palm reading. Our palms actually change as we get older. So, our experiences change and become different as we get older, as the lines on our hands change. That is exactly the same with memory and the way we feel emotions. What might've really upset me twenty years ago doesn't upset me at all now. But then there may be something from fifty years ago which I don't even remember upsetting me which will now start to come into fruition, and I'll feel as a memory and as an emotion. We don't have control over a lot of these things, they're just part of our DNA. They're something we live with. They grow and expand, and they shrink. Memories do that. So, when I paint and when I work, I don't really know what's going to happen until I start doing it.



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AG: Your work is often based on a raw vulnerability, laying bare your emotions and experiences for the world to see. How do you balance the need for personal privacy with the desire to create honest, impactful art? Does exposing your vulnerabilities ever take a toll on you?

TE: Just exposing myself takes a toll on me. When I was younger I didn't have any boundaries and I didn't understand when I'd gone too far. That was quite harmful to myself. Now I protect myself, I look after myself a lot more. When I paint I don't choose what I release, but I work with it. It's almost like I have two selves, and they collaborate and work on what I can release, what I can work with, what I decide can be release into the world, while making sure that it's not so harmful to me. That's because I'm older and I understand the situations much more. And so, I work with something, and I learn from it and it's not harmful, it's not on the other side of me. It's about joining me together. Take a simple thing like being ill, you know, fighting against death would have taken up a lot of energy. So, what I did was I went going with it, and then I came out through the other side with it, feeling that I'd learnt something as opposed to having a fear and a hate of it.

AG: You stopped painting in 1990 when you became pregnant because the smell of oil paint made you sick. That year marked the beginning of a personal crisis that lasted for six years, until you locked yourself in a room inside a gallery and started painting again. You titled that performative act Exorcism of the Last Painting I Ever Made, and I'm very grateful we were able to re-create that room for your exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi. What motivated you to confront this fear and reclaim painting as a medium, and how does that experience resonate with you today?

**TE:** Because I really wanted to paint again. After my abortion, I never wanted to paint 'pictures' for the sake of it. I need to capture the feeling. For me, painting is about the essence of creativity, it's close to heaven, it's another world, it's like going into another realm, another space, something which isn't human. I wouldn't paint because I was wrapped up with this strange guilt and self-punishment from having the abortion.

I wouldn't let myself go. I mean I paint with acrylics now. I still won't paint with oil paint, even if I love that smell now. Also, I've become a master with acrylics, so why would I want to? There are only two regrets I have about that project. One is that I was originally supposed to burn everything I made during the performance. Had I done so I would have continued painting because I would've regretted burning it and I would have wanted to see re-live those moments of painting again. The other regret is that I didn't continue painting with such a strength as I did in that room until years later. Now painting is in my blood, it's part of me, it flows from me as much as

drawing. But it's taken me all this time to work that out and feel it.

AG: We are lucky to have included several of your neons in the exhibition. How important is it to have these sentiments in lights instead of writing on a canvas or the writing within your blankets, for example?

**TE:** I grew up with neons. They were everywhere in Margate. Now there's very little of it in Margate but so much of it in the rest of the world, actually. I started making neon because I wanted to see more of it. And you know, the thing is be careful of what you wish for. Real neon contains argon and neon gases which actually make people feel good. They emanate, they radiate an energy. That's why you used to have neons in casinos, brothels, bars, clubs, etcetera. Neon is a pulsing energy of electricity, so it's alive, it's a live thing, and that makes me feel good. The whole idea of neon is one thing, using my writing for it is another. It came about with Carl Freedman, the gallerist. Back in 1995 I had to make a sign for my museum and Carl said to me: "You like neon, why don't you do it in neon?" So, I wrote The Tracey Emin Museum and that was the first neon I made. I still have that neon. It's very sweet and guite small, but it was the beginning of everything. Putting your name in lights is an affirmation of confidence. Neon, as a thing is just so beautiful and makes you feel so good. That's why I do it, that's why I've done it.



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**AG:** Places like Margate and London have been integral to your work. How does the environment you're in affect your creative process? Is there a place that you've found particularly inspiring or essential to your work?

**TE:** I'm very lucky. It's more about a state of mind. I could be in the most beautiful place, the most beautiful studio, with the most beautiful light and I wouldn't do anything because my brain's all scrambled and it's not working, or because I'm so tense or my body's in a state of trauma. On the other hand, I can be sitting at the kitchen table and just do the best watercolours I've ever done in my life. Working is about my state of mind and how I am. Over the last few years I've been able to paint in all my studios, France, London, Margate and I've been very, just very happy working wherever I was. Recently I've been able to draw in Austria, and do watercolours on planes. It's just about my state of mind, what makes me happy. But one of my favourites places is my studio in France, which I really love.

**AG:** As an artist who has continually pushed boundaries, what do you hope your work will communicate to future generations? How do you see your legacy within the broader context of art history?

**TE**: I think a lot of young people get inspired by what's fashionable and what's appropriate for now. With art shouldn't be like that. Art should be always about what's appropriate for yourself, forever. It should have sincerity and it should come from a genuine desire to answer questions yourself. I mean that's what I do. My work was highly unfashionable for a long time. But it doesn't matter because I knew it was the right thing for me to do. And how you present something and the context of something is really important. You could be making the best art in the world but if it's in the wrong context no-one will ever see it.



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# At Munch's house on the Oslo fjord, she created the video *Homage to Edvard Munch and all my dead children* (1998). At dawn, naked in a foetal position on the pier near the artist's home, she raises her head and lets out a guttural scream—a lament for her unborn children, in response to Munch's iconic imagery.

The work *My Bed* dates 1998 and gained significant media attention in 1999 when, shortlisted for the Turner Prize, it was exhibited at the Tate Gallery. An uncensored depiction of Emin's bed during a period of crisis, it brought the artist international recognition. In 2007, she represented the Great Britain at the  $52^{nd}$  Venice Biennale with the exhibition *Borrowed Light*.



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## TRACEY EMIN: BIOGRAPHY

Tracey Karima Emin and her twin brother Paul were born on 13 July 1963 in Croydon, a suburb of London, to a father of Turkish Cypriot origin and an English mother of Romnichal descent, a Romani group that settled in the United Kingdom in the 16th century.

In 1996, the family relocated to the seaside town of Margate in Kent. Her earliest works draw upon her family, childhood, and the tumultuous teenage years she experienced while growing up in Margate, which included being raped at the age of thirteen and leaving home at fifteen. Emin enrolled in Fashion at Medway College but dropped out in 1983 to study printmaking at the Sir John Cass School of Art. She obtained a Fine Art degree at Maidstone College and continued her studies at the Royal College of Art in London, specialising in painting and earning her Master's degree in 1989 with the thesis My Man Munch.

In 1990, while pregnant, she stopped painting due to the smell of oil paint and turpentine. After experiencing two traumatic abortions, she destroyed her work and abandoned painting. She financed her journey from San Francisco to New York by giving public readings of her autobiographical book Exploration of the Soul along the way.

In *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With* 1963-1995, she stitched the names of 102 people with whom she had shared a bed since birth onto a camping tent using the appliqué technique. The work was destroyed in a fire in 2004.

"In 1995, I had to create a sign for my museum, and Carl [Freedman] said to me, 'You like neon, why don't you make it that way?' So I wrote The Tracey Emin Museum, and that was my first neon."

# TRACEY

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For the first Folkestone Triennial in 2008, Emin created Baby Things, a series of bronze casts of baby clothes found on the streets. Scattered around the town, they evoke the high rate of teenage pregnancies in the seaside community.

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In 2010, Emin dedicated and donated to Margate the neon I Never Stopped Loving You, installed on the façade of Droit House, a former customs house overlooking the sea.

In 2011, she was appointed Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy, becoming one of the first two women in history to hold this position at the institution.

The exhibition Tracey Emin Egon Schiele. Where I Want to Go was held at the Leopold Museum in Vienna in 2015.

I Want My Time With You (2017) was installed at St. Pancras International Station in London, a place of daily meetings and farewells.

The sculpture The Mother (2021), placed outside the new Munch Museum in Oslo, pays tribute to both Emin's mother and Munch's. Standing nine metres tall and cast in bronze, it depicts a female figure open towards the fjord-a symbol of protection, vulnerability, and eroticism.

In 2022 the Tracey Karima Emin (TKE) Studios were inaugurated in Margate, a professional artist's studios entirely subsidized by her, with an additional free, studio-based, art school programme called Tracey Emin Artist Residency (TEAR).

In 2023, Emin created The Doors: bronze-drawn portraits for the newly restored entrance doors of the National Portrait Gallery, depictingthrough an innovative technique-45 women from all social backgrounds and historical periods.

In May 2024, she was honoured by King Charles III with a Damehood in the King's Birthday Honours for her services to art.

Tracey Emin lives and works between London, Margate, and the South of France.



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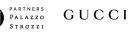


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### **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Palazzo Strozzi is committed to its visitors, offering a wide range of activities designed to make the art experience engaging and accessible to all audiences. Tracey Emin's works reflect on fundamental aspects of human experience, such as sexuality, illness, loneliness, and love. For this reason, all exhibition pathways have been carefully designed with consideration for different age groups and sensitivities.

### ADULTS

#### Guided tours

Visits to the exhibition through the works by Tracey Emin.

For groups: €100 adults groups, €80 university students groups; max 20 people.

For individual visitors (only in Italian): free with ticket entrance on Mondays at 18.00, on Sundays at 15.00, with the support of Unicoop Firenze. Reservation required.

#### Emin tells Emin

Fondazione CR Firenze and Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi promote a special series of visits to explore the artist's work through their own words: excerpts from interviews and conversations to discover her unique storytelling.

8 and 15 April, 15 and 21 May, 11 and 18 June 2025, 18.00.

Reservation required.

Fondazione CR Firenze offers the admission and the activity free of charge to residents of the Metropolitan City of Florence.

#### Notes on Sex and Solitude

A special booklet dedicated to the exhibition, conceived as an emotional journey through Tracey Emin's vocabulary, created by undergraduate students from the Arts Curating and Multimedia Arts courses at Istituto Marangoni Firenze. Available for free in print and digital formats.

#### Body, Sex, Emotions

A series of four events inspired by Tracey Emin's art, opening a discussion on contemporary issues such as sex, the body, gender, and affectivity, in a dialogue with disciplines like sociology, philosophy, sexology, and digital media. With the participation of: Filippo Maria Nimbi (psychosexologist), Jacopo Melio (journalist and activist), Manolo Farci (sociologist), Maura Gancitano (writer and philosopher).

Thursday 27 March, 24 April, 22 May, 19 June, 18.00 Palazzo Strozzi, Altana. Free entry, reservation recommended.

#### SCHOOLS

#### All That I Am

A special project for students in the third, fourth, and fifth years of upper secondary school. Structured in two sessions-one in the classroom and one at the exhibition-this activity offers an opportunity to explore Tracey Emin's art through a guided journey combining discussion, observation, and reflection for a thoughtful exploration of the exhibition's themes. €8 per student, including exhibition ticket. Reservation required

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#### FAMILIES

#### Workshops for families

Activities for kids and adults in the show (only in Italian). Free activity with exhibition admission ticket. Reservation required. - *From Head to Toe*: every Saturday at 10.30 for families with children aged 3 to 6 - *Shapes of Me*: every Sunday at 10.30 for families with children aged 7 to 12

#### ACCESS PROGRAMS

A programme of activities designed to make Palazzo Strozzi a venue for coexisting with differences. Projects for autistic young people (*Nuances*), for people with Alzheimer's (*With Many Voices*), disabilities and mental distress (*Connections*), tours in Italian Sign Language (*Signs and Words*) and a dance pathway devoted to the wellbeing of people with Parkinson's (*Free Flowing*).

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### Presentation of the Fuorimostra

Monday, 14 April 2025, 17.30 Biblioteca della Toscana Pietro Leopoldo Firenze, Piazza dell'Unità Italiana 1

#### Palazzo Strozzi Night

Thursday 12 June, from 18.00 A special evening dedicated to Under30 in collaboration with Unicoop Firenze.

#### Exorcism of the last painting

Thursday, 5 June, 17.30 Palazzo Strozzi, Maria Manetti Shrem Educational Center. Public presentation of the seminar conducted with students from the University of Florence, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Art History, dedicated to the work of Tracey Emin.

#### Microcosmo Confession

Microcosm is Palazzo Strozzi's annual magazine, a space for exploration and dialogue featuring visual and textual contributions from young artists, curators, and graphic designers from Tuscany's leading art academies. The 2025 edition, inspired by Tracey Emin's artistic research, revolves around the word "confession", understood as self-exposure and honesty in making art. The project takes shape through individual paths, moments of collective learning, and shared experiences. Magazine presentation: Wednesday, 2 July, 18.00

Palazzo Strozzi, Altana

Free entry, reservation recommended.

With the support of the Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati.

INFO AND RESERVATION

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#### THE MARIA MANETTI SHREM EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Opened in 2022 with more than 50,000 people attending over 1,000 activities in the last 2 years, the Maria Manetti Shrem Educational Center has become the heart and the starting point for all the Palazzo Strozzi's activities for schools, families, young people, and adults, with a particular focus on accessibility.

These spaces have been specifically designed to allow as many people as possible to experience Palazzo Strozzi's exhibitions through numerous activities aimed at transforming the encounter with art into an opportunity where the expressive potential of each participant is valued, and where everyone can feel involved.

The Maria Manetti Shrem Educational Center is a space where it is possible to forge new relationships between individuals and their families, as well as create an interdisciplinary field of work and discussion among artists, museum educators, healthcare professionals, and experts from various disciplines. Fundamental part of the activities are those dedicated to inclusion and accessibility, for autistic young people (Nuances), for people with Alzheimer's (With Many Voices), disabilities and mental distress (Connections), tours in Italian Sign Language (Signs and Words) and a dance pathway devoted to the wellbeing of people with Parkinson's (Free Flowing).

"The art of living is the art of giving. I am truly pleased to support the arts and culture and, in particular, make access possible for the most vulnerable people. Art can help people by bringing them together through a holistic vision." (Maria Manetti Shrem)

Born in Florence, Italy, Maria Manetti Shrem relocated to San Francisco, California, in 1972, where she played a pivotal role in the internationalization of iconic fashion brands such as Gucci and Fendi.

Together with her husband, Jan Shrem, Maria has supported over 55 charitable programs across the U.S., Italy, France, Mexico, Africa, and the UK, contributing to more than 35 foundations. Their philanthropy spans education, music, art, and medicine, making a lasting social impact worldwide. They have supported institutions such as UC Davis, UCSF, Sutter Health, the San Francisco Opera, Festival Napa Valley, the Metropolitan Opera, the King's Foundation, the Royal Drawing School, UC Berkeley-Cal Performances, KQED, the San Francisco Symphony, SF Film, SF MoMA, ArtSmart, Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Andrea Bocelli Foundation, the Italian National Trust, Museo 900, Friends of the Louvre, Friends of Versailles, and Venetian Heritage. Maria also funded a scholarship in Africa through the Global Sojourns Giving Circle, empowering the next generation of women leaders.

Maria and Jan co-founded the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, whose architectural design was recognized by ARTnews as "One of the World's 25 Best Museum Buildings of the Past 100 Years."

Maria has been honored as a cultural ambassador and philanthropist. In 2019, Italian President Sergio Mattarella awarded her the Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy. In 2022, the Mayor of Florence presented her with the Keys to the City for her exemplary patronage, following in the spirit of the Medici legacy. The City and County of San Francisco also declared June 22 as Manetti Shrem Day for Philanthropy. Her accolades include the inaugural Angels of the Arts Award from Festival Napa Valley, the Spirit of the Opera Award from the San Francisco Opera, and the lighting of San Francisco City Hall in the Italian flag colors during Maria-50 Years in America, a celebration of her legacy. She also received the 2023 UC Davis Medal, the highest honor from the University of California system, in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the arts. In 2024, UC Berkeley recognized Maria and Jan as Builders of Berkeley. In Spring 2024, Maria made history by endowing the College of Letters and Science at UC Davis with its largest gift ever, establishing eight endowments to protect the arts and humanities in perpetuity, creating a Renaissance Zeitgeist through the establishment of a dedicated Art District, inaugurated in January 2025. In recognition of her global philanthropy, Maria received the 2024 Premio StellaRe from Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Torino, Italy. Because of her impactful philanthropy, she is also a 2025 Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipient.





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### FUORIMOSTRA

For each exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi proposes an itinerary in the region, creating a connection between the exhibition and museums, cultural institutions and partners of the Metropolitan City of Florence and the Region of Tuscany. Palazzo Strozzi acts as a catalyst for Florence and Tuscany, seeking synergies and collaborations that stimulate the cultural promotion of the region.

17 venues are involved in the *Fuorimostra* developed on the occasion of the exhibition *Tracey Emin. Sex and Solitude*:

#### Firenze

Palazzo Gucci The British Institute of Florence Collezione Casamonti Istituto Marangoni Firenze Museo Ferragamo Museo Novecento Museo Sant'Orsola Savoy Hotel Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Teatro della Toscana The Social Hub Villa Bardini Villa Romana

Bargino

Antinori Art Project

Palaia Villa Lena

Prato Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci

# San Casciano Val di Pesa

Collezione Freymond

More info: www.palazzostrozzi.org/fuorimostra



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#### **EXHIBITION WORKLIST**

#### Façade

0.1 Sex and Solitude 2025 neon, 106 × 804 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### Courtyard

0.2 *I Followed You To the End* 2024 patinated bronze, 260 × 690 × 393 cm Collection Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands

#### Room 1 – POEMS

1.1 Love Poem for CF 2007 neon, 450 × 333.4 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### 1.2

*There was no Right way* 2022 acrylic on canvas, 207.3 × 281.3 cm Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by Lewis Cheng, Rob Hayes, the Firestorm Foundation, and an anonymous donor, 2023, 2023.102

1.3

Everything is moving nothing Feels Safe. You made me Feel like This 2018 acrylic on canvas, 151.2 × 182.8 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery

#### Room 2 - EXORCISM

2.1, 2.2, 2.3 Naked Photos – Life Model Goes Mad I, II, III 1996 giclée on photo rag paper, 53.5 × 53 cm Courtesy of the Artist

2.4

*Exorcism of the last painting I ever made* 1996 Performance/ installation, internal dim. 350 × 430 × 430 cm Courtesy of Schroeder Collection and Faurschou Collection

#### Room 3 - COMING DOWN FROM LOVE

3.1 *I Wanted You To Fuck Me So Much I Couldn't Paint Anymore* 2020 acrylic on canvas, 205.7 × 279.1 cm Fine Art Private Museum c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery

3.2 Because You Kept Touching Me 2019 acrylic on canvas, 182.1 × 214.1 cm Collection of Gary Steele and Steven Rice c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery



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3.3 *It - didnt stop - I didnt stop* 2019 acrylic on canvas, 152 × 183.5 cm Brussels, Xavier Hufkens Gallery

3.4

Not Fuckable 2024 acrylic on canvas, 205.4 × 279.5 cm The George Economou Collection

3.5 *This Was The Beginning* 2020 acrylic on canvas, cm 182 × 214 Private collection, Asia

3.6 *There was blood* 2022 acrylic on canvas, 205.5 × 279.5 cm Cherñajovsky Collection

3.7 Coming Down From Love 2024 bronze, 60 × 161 × 76 cm Cherñajovsky Collection

#### **Room 4 - HURT HEART**

4.1

In my defence - I thought of only you 2017 bronze with silver nitrate patina, 23.5 × 25 × 16 cm Michel Urbain Collection, Paris

4.2

*I held your heart* 2017 bronze with silver nitrate patina, 18 × 30 × 22 cm ProWinko ProArt Collection

4.3

*I wanted you more* 2017 bronze with silver nitrate patina, 7 × 35.4 × 16 cm Private Collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery

4.4

*I don't need to see you I can feel you!* 2016 embroidered calico, 209.5 × 244.3 cm Collezione privata

4.5 *No Distance* 2016 embroidered calico, 201 × 171.7 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery

4.6 *More dreams* 2016 acrylic on canvas, 30.9 × 30.6 cm Private collection, London



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4.7 *Hold me* 2016 acrylic on canvas, 20 × 20 cm Private collection

4.8

Hurt Heart 2015 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 20.3 cm ACAF, Collection by Yashian Schauble, Melbourne, Australia

4.9 *Heart Land* 2016 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.3 cm Private collection

#### **Room 5 - THOSE WHO SUFFER LOVE**

5.1 Those who Suffer LOVE 2009 neon, 57 × 209.3 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

5.2 Those who suffer love 2009 animation film, video projection, 20 seconds, looped Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### **Room 6 - A DIFFERENT TIME**

6.1 A Different Time – May 2020 2020 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.4 cm Stiftung Der bewohnte Garten, Pullheim

6.2

*I was so hurt I was crying* 2021 acrylic on canvas, 25.7 × 30.8 × 2.4 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

6.3 *The Kiss* 2020 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.4 cm Kenny Schachter

6.4 *Thriving on Solitude* 2020 acrylic on canvas, 30.07 × 30.07 cm JHA Collection

6.5 A Message From The Gods in Advance - December 2019 2019 acrylic on canvas, 20.5 × 20.3 cm Rankin Family Collection

6.6

*My Mums Ashes – In The Ashes Room* 2020 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.4 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube



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6.7 5 Hours 2020 acrylic on canvas, 21 × 30 cm Collection of Michelle Kennedy and Richard Tyler

6.8

Sleeping with the night 2020 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.4 cm Private collection, Hong Kong

6.9 5 Hours Long – With you in my mind 2020 acrylic on canvas, 20.3 × 25.4 cm Collection of Michelle Kennedy and Richard Tyler

#### Room 7 - I DO NOT EXPECT

7.1 *I do not expect* 2002 appliquéd blanket, 264 × 185 cm Art Gallery of New South Wales Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Geoff Ainsworth AM 2018

7.2 You were still There 2018 acrylic on canvas, 183.5 × 122 cm Private collection, London

7.3 It was all too Much 2018 acrylic on canvas, 182.3 × 182.3 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

7.4 *Always You*, 2009 appliquéd and embroidered cotton, 41.3 × 43.6 cm Private collection

#### Room 8 - TAKE MY SOUL

8.1 *Automatic Orgasm* 2001 appliquéd blanket, 263 × 214 cm Frank Gallipoli

8.2 *I waited so Long* 2022 acrylic on canvas, 183.1 × 183.3 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery

8.3 *The Decent 2112 HK* 2016 embroidered calico,163 × 220.8 cm Private collection c/o Xavier Hufkens Gallery









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8.4 *The Crucifixion* 2022 acrylic on canvas, 180 × 120 cm Courtesy of the Artist and Galleria Lorcan O'Neill

#### 8.5

*Take my soul* 2011 embroidered cotton, 41 × 45 cm Private collection

#### 8.6

*Take me to Heaven* 2024 acrylic on canvas, 205.4 × 279.5 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### 8.7

A cloud of blood an invisible mist 2013 bronze with white patina,  $21.6 \times 38.1 \times 14$  cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### 8.8

*I whisper to my past do I have another choice* 2013 bronze with white patina, 36 x 45.7 x 18.4 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### 8.9

*Humiliated* 2013 bronze with white patina, 26 × 31.5 × 18 cm Courtesy of the Artist and Galleria Lorcan O' Neill

#### 8.10

You have no idea how safe you make me feel 2013 bronze with white patina,  $24.1 \times 39.4 \times 19.1$  cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

#### 8.11

There is nothing left but you 2013 bronze with white patina,  $23.5 \times 40.5 \times 15.5$  cm Courtesy of the Artist and Galleria Lorcan O' Neill

#### 8.12

*Crucifixion* 2014 bronze with white patina, 25 × 17 × 7 cm Courtesy of the Artist and Galleria Lorcan O'Neill

#### Room 9 - ALL I WANT IS YOU

9.1 *I Longed For You* 2019 neon, 308.6 × 470 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

9.2 All I want is you 2016 bronze, 238 × 245 × 233 cm Brussels, Xavier Hufkens Gallery











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9.3 You Should have Saved me 2023 acrylic on canvas, 182.1 × 120.1 cm Fentener van Vlissingen Collection

9.4 Belligerence 2014 bronze, 43 × 38 × 2.5 cm each Peter and Elisabetta Mallinson

#### Room 10 - THE END OF THE DAY

10.1 The End of The Day 2022 individual monoprint, 144.8 × 107 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

10.2

*Like The moon, You Rolled across my back* 2022 individual monoprint, 152.4 × 244 cm Private collection, London

10.3 *We Fell FromThe Sky* 2022 individual monoprint, 152.4 × 244 cm Courtesy of Ivor Braka Ltd

10.4

*My Halo Was The Moon* 2022 individual monoprint, 152.4 × 244 cm Collection of José Pizarro and Peter Meades

10.5

*It Never Felt like This* 2022 individual monoprint, 152.4 × 244 cm Zabludowicz Collection

10.6 *The Sea came in, The Sea went out - It Left me* 2022 individual monoprint, 152.4 × 244 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube

10.7 This is exactly how I feel right now 2016 bronze, 29 × 129 × 39 cm Courtesy of the Artist and White Cube



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